

# Scoped Carbine for Tactical Teams

**By John Montenegro**

I readily admit that I am a gun guy and enjoy every aspect of shooting from pistols to subguns to carbines to sniper rifles. I have a constant need to research, test, evaluate and modify gear to improve performance and capability. Fortunately for me, over the past 15+ years I've been assigned to a busy full-time tactical team and had the privilege and responsibility to develop our shooting programs and determine what equipment we issued as the unit's armorer. Additionally, I have worked every level on the tactical team and with over 1,000 call-outs in my career the patterns of needs clearly emerge. One area of training and equipment gap we regularly see is the adoption of a scoped carbine program and what type of training should accompany this weapon system.

I have taught multiple weapon systems for the Special Enforcement Bureau, the California Association of Tactical Officers and Integrated Tactical Concepts. Most agencies I encounter have tactical personnel issued a short-barreled rifle for an entry gun and/or a sniper rifle for intelligence gathering and precision work. These sufficed in prior generations when Armored Rescue Vehicles were not widespread. Tactics have changed, ARVs bring us closer to the problem which provides better deployment of less-lethal, canine and chemical agent delivery. The other side is we are placing personnel in positions like the turret where they are operating as mini-snipers without the optimal tools. The red dot or holographic site is limited to 1X magnification and is fantastic for entry but does not provide any additional information beyond what the naked eye can see.

Another aspect is that data available points to the reality that domestic law enforcement snipers work at significantly closer distances than our military counterparts. The American Sniper Association does an excellent job at collecting shots taken by snipers across the nation. The average sniper engagement is between 50-60 yards give or take on the year of the collection cycle. Think about that for a second. States like Alaska, Wyoming, North Dakota, New Hampshire and Maine with lower population densities and open spaces still have sniper shots at close ranges. Those of us who work in densely populated areas are deployed 15-20 yards from apartment to apartment, across courtyards, from one house to the neighboring property, etc. Optics that are minimum 4X or 5X with parallax limit of 25 yards may not be ideal for that 20 yard hide in the target apartment complex. Moreover, a high-risk rural area search or clearing yards to get into position is not optimized with a bolt action .308 with a 4X16 scope. There is a very usable space in domestic law enforcement for a scoped carbine with 1X to higher end magnification.

The scoped carbine with a 1X LVPO has significant flexibility for deployment in tactical operations. It can be utilized in active shooter response with rapid deployment needs of potential distance shots or close-range engagements. You can operate it in a mini-sniper role in the ARV turret and/or off tripods in urban hides and even overwatch at certain venues. I still prefer the speed of the red dot for entry work but everything outside the structure the scoped carbine can excel. I always carry a 3X magnifier with my 11.5" carbine for emergency needs but the scoped carbine is my go-to when I have the opportunity.

Our collective experiences at my unit highlighted the following facts: We are in the turret of an ARV significantly more than in a concealed sniper hide and we are on a scoped carbine vast majority of the time in the concealed spot due to such close proximity. In many ways the bolt action .308 is regulated to Hostage Rescue Operations or overwatch at public venues where hyper-precision and/or intermediate barrier penetration is important to us. As a result, we spent significant time researching, testing, evaluating and selecting optics, ammunition, triggers and rails that provided an advantage of a scoped carbine in these operations. Additionally, we developed our training curriculum to reflect what we actually and repeatedly do on call-outs.

If you look up scoped carbine training today, much of what you will find is distance shooting and pushing the capability of the .223/.556 out to its maximum capacity. Running the platform hard out to 500-600 yards is fantastic and I think the scoped carbine is one of the most versatile weapons out there. I have plans on building out a MK12 Mod H and an NSW Recce rifle to add to my personal armory, I am a gun guy remember. Contemporary scoped carbine training reflects how these rifles were used during the Global War on Terror but has little to do with how they can and are used on domestic tactical teams.

A lot of scoped carbine training today fails include intermediate barrier testing, close range micro-doping for complex shots, working from ARV turrets or ports and rapid deployment to problems with developing information. We have students that have never witnessed what their issued carbine round does post intermediate barrier like dual pane glass. Is there a difference from 3' to 8' off the glass or does the round behave different when striking the barrier at 45 degrees vs. 90 degrees? This is critical information for a sniper on a tactical team and if you do not treat the scoped carbine with the same focus as a bolt action sniper rifle then gaps exist in your preparation. What carbine round is issued to patrol may not be the best or ideal one for a tactical team that has different responsibilities.

My ideal scoped carbine for tactical teams today:

- 14.5" capable of 1-1.5 MOA
- Geissele 2 stage trigger
- Mid-length gas system

- A5 buffer system
- Quick detach bipod
- 1X10, 1X8, 1X6 with capped windage and exposed locking turret or zero stop
- Mil/Mil FFP LVPO
- Daytime bright illumination
- Suppressed for working inside of structures or near teammates
- 12 O'clock red dot is my personal favorite but some teammates run offset

There are many options and manufactures out there and I don't have a specific preference for one over the other. It depends on what you or your agency can afford but there is a marked difference from a rack grade patrol rifle with a \$300 dollar scope from Amazon and a purpose-built scoped carbine with quality glass. If you are considering a scoped carbine program for your tactical team or agency then I highly recommend seeking out training from all the reputable companies you can. There is a ton of value in pushing the platform to its limits and understanding what you and your gun configuration is capable of. Just don't forget to filter equipment selection and training methodology through what you actually do in domestic law enforcement and those gaps will be eliminated.

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